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Tougher penalties for methamphetamine production sent to governor

Lansing – Legislation to increase fines and penalties for the production of methamphetamine in Michigan won the approval of the state Legislature recently.

Senate Bills 648-652, 698 and 777 provide tools for law enforcement and impose stiffer penalties for those participating in the production of the highly addictive and fairly simple to produce illegal stimulant known as methamphetamine.

“This is not a big-city problem, but a growing and widespread threat that has the potential to affect every Michigan community,” said Sen. Alan Sanborn (R-Richmond), a sponsor of the bill package. “This legislation is aimed at reducing accessibility to the chemical components and creating deterrents to involvement before production and use become epidemic, and more lives and more homes are destroyed throughout Michigan.”

Methamphetamine production is a growing problem throughout Michigan, with labs springing up in rural and urban areas, in barns, garages, apartments, storage areas and vehicles, rendering them contaminated and unsafe for future use or occupancy. Toxic byproducts given off during production pose serious environmental risks, as they often are dumped in public sewers or directly on the ground.

The package of bills includes provisions that:

- Prohibit the possession of more than 12 grams of pseudoephedrine (with the exception of pediatric products), a chemical used in the production of methamphetamine;
- Increase to 20 years imprisonment the maximum penalty for those owning or possessing the places, chemicals or equipment used in production of the illegal stimulant;
- Create a new crime with a maximum penalty of four years imprisonment for people who transport anhydrous ammonia in unapproved containers;
- Require inspection of property determined to have been used for the production of methamphetamines and public warnings if contamination is discovered.

Senate Bills 648-652, 698 and 777 now go to the governor for her signature.